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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: October 25, 1965

SUBJECT : Amer Visit to Paris

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Bruno de Leusse, Minister-Counselor, French Embassy
Mr. Paul Carton, Counselor, French Embassy

Raymond A. Hare, Assistant Secretary, NEA
Michael Sterner, Desk Officer, U.A.R./Syrian Affairs

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Calling to welcome Mr. Hare to his new post in the Department, Mr. de Leusse said he would use the opportunity to give a resume of the Amer visit to Paris. The French were pleased with the way the visit went, and impressed with the reasonableness of the Egyptians. The latter had not, for example, taxed the GOF for its ties with Israel. They indicated acceptance of France's close relations with Israel and merely expressed the hope, in low-key fashion, that the GOF would do nothing to jeopardize the existing power equilibrium in the Near East. The French on their side agreed with the desirability of preserving the status quo on the Arab-Israel dispute and expressed their view that every state in the area should enjoy protection from outside interference.

On the question of French aid to the U.A.R. the Egyptians similarly had employed low-pressure tactics. They had not asked for any increase in aid over the $30 million of credits extended about six months ago. Asked whether the $30 million was in commercial credits, Mr. de Leusse said he thought it had been granted to assist the U.A.R. development program, and that it was "80 per cent tied."

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Mr. de Leusse said that while the visit had not achieved anything momentous, in a small way it had been a pleasant surprise. The Egyptians left the impression that they had learned a lot in the last year or two. They had made many sober protestations, unsolicited by the French, of their need for good relations with the Western states. Mr. Carton also cited as an indication of a greater willingness to appraise themselves realistically the fact that the Egyptians had straightforwardly referred to their attempts at unity thus far as "failures". Mr. de Leusse asked Mr. Hare whether he thought increasing internal difficulties were the chief cause of these signs of greater reasonableness on Nasser's part. Mr. Hare said it was difficult to say. Internal problems were undoubtedly part of the story, but so were external developments in his opinion. Ben Bella's ouster was perhaps the most significant of these; there was also the failure of the U.A.R.-backed rebel movement in the Congo and the U.A.R.'s fiasco in Yemen. Perhaps, also, it was partly attributable to an aging process, the simple fact that Nasser was getting older. Drawing from his own experience in Cairo, Mr. Hare said Nasser's public performances often had very little relation to what he was like privately. In private conversation he could be quite thoughtful and restrained.